

Book Reviews

Aborigines and the 'Sport of Kings': Aboriginal Jockeys in Australian Racing History by John Maynard, 149 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2013, ISBN 9781922059543 (pbk), \$24.95.

Aborigines and the 'Sport of Kings' is an enlarged version of John Maynard's *Aboriginal Stars of the Turf: Jockeys of Australian Racing History*, first published in 2002. The book includes information on 35 Aboriginal jockeys, 32 male and three female, and the book is dedicated to the late Leigh-Anne Gordon, who died as a result of a race fall. She was Australia's first female Aboriginal jockey to ride a winner on a metropolitan track. The number of Aboriginal jockeys is surprisingly small given the prominence of Aboriginal people in the cattle industry and not many of them are well known. The majority of them did most of their riding in country areas of New South Wales and Queensland, but a few achieved national and international fame.

The first Aboriginal jockey to become famous was Rae 'Togo' Johnstone who rose to prominence in Sydney in the 1920s. In 1931 he went overseas. He was refused a licence to ride by the British racing authorities, but was granted a licence in France. In 1933 he won the French Jockeys' Premiership and the French licence enabled him to ride in England where he won a number of major races. He spent the war in Vichy France and Monte Carlo. He was imprisoned first by Italian authorities and later by the Gestapo, but he managed to escape. After the war he won major races in France and Britain including three English Derbies. Maynard estimates that during the 1950s he was probably the highest paid sportsman in Europe.

The other Aboriginal jockey to achieve international fame was Richard Lawrence 'Darby' McCarthy. He rose to prominence in Brisbane and Sydney in the early 1960s and then went to France where he rode with great success and became quite wealthy. Returning to Australia he continued to win big races. I remember seeing him win the AJC Derby and Epsom on the same day in the spring of 1969. After that his career began to taper off and in 1976 he was disqualified for seven years for allegedly conspiring to fix a minor race at Hamilton in western Victoria. The suspension was later reduced to two years following an appeal in which he was supported by John Cain, later Premier of Victoria, and Sir John Dillon, Victorian State Ombudsman. Following further appeals the charge was expunged from his record, but the damage was done. He was not getting rides and his health deteriorated from a mixture of alcohol and prescribed weight-reducing drugs. However, he recovered from this low period in his life and recently he established the Darby McCarthy Aboriginal Employment and Training program to support Indigenous youth find employment.

One chapter is devoted to David Hugh 'Darby' Munro, a household name in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, perhaps the most famous Australian jockey of all.

Maynard is rather apologetic about including him since his investigation of Munro's family history fails to reveal any Aboriginal ancestry. Munro was rather dark skinned and punters recognised it. When he was beaten on a favourite he was called a 'black bastard' or a 'black bludger'. Many considered him to be Aboriginal, including Darby McCarthy, who took the name 'Darby' from the famous jockey. If he was not Aboriginal, one wonders how he came to be so dark skinned in the days of White Australia.

The author's father, Merv Maynard was a prominent jockey in the 1950s. In October 1952 he rode the winner of what had been for some years the King's Cup, but with the death of King George VI in February of that year the race became the Queen's Cup. Forty years later when Queen Elizabeth was coming to Australia, Buckingham Palace contacted the Maynard family to tell them that the Queen wanted to meet the jockey who had ridden the winner of the first Queen's Cup. On 22 February 1992 60-year-old Merv Maynard, still riding at the time, met the Queen at Royal Randwick.

A chapter is devoted to Peter St Albans. In 1876 he rode the filly Briseis to victory in the Melbourne Cup. He was only 13 at the time and had to wag school to ride in the race. He gained the mount partly because he could make the light weight, namely 6 stone 4 pounds (39.9 kilograms), though he did develop into a leading rider until a serious fall ended his career in 1882. He was perhaps the first successful Aboriginal jockey. Maynard devotes 11 pages to the question of whether he was Aboriginal without being able to come to a definite conclusion.

One theme that runs through the book is that people who were of Aboriginal descent but not obviously Aboriginal in appearance tended not to admit to being Aboriginal and this included Rae Togo Johnstone. This began to change in the late 1960s, and nowadays people with some Aboriginal 'blood' are proud of that part of their ancestry. Frank Reys, a prominent jockey in the 1960s and 1970s who rode Gala Supreme to victory in the 1973 Melbourne Cup, was of mixed Filipino and Aboriginal descent. Unfortunately the press always referred to him as Filipino and his Aboriginal ancestry went unrecognised.

Barry Blake
La Trobe University

Blind Moses: Moses Tjalkabota Uraiakuraia, Aranda Man of High Degree and Christian Evangelist by Peter Latz, 179 pp, The author [distributed by IAD Press], Alice Springs, 2014, ISBN 9870992572709 (pbk), \$35.00.

This book adds to the historical literature on Central Australia, and should be of value for those with interests in the history of frontier contact, missions, and/or the Arrernte (Aranda) people. It complements works on Arrernte contact history (Austin-Broos 2009), the history of the Hermannsburg mission (Albrecht 2002), biographical accounts of particular missionaries – Carl Strehlow (Strehlow 1969), his wife Frieda Keysser (Strehlow 2011), his successor F. W. Albrecht (Henson 1994) – and scholars of Aranda culture – T. G. H. Strehlow (Hill 2002), Spencer and Gillen (Mulvaney and Calaby 1985; Mulvaney, Morphy and Petch 1997), and Olive Pink (Marcus 2001). Previous biographies of individual Aboriginal people are confined to artists – Albert Namatjira (Amadio 1986) and Wenten Rubuntja (Rubuntja and Green 2002) – and stockmen (Ross and Whitebeach 2007). Here, in contrast, we have an account of an Aboriginal leader who was deeply involved in the work of the mission.

Moses' story is based on an oral account dictated by Moses toward the end of his life, which was written down in Aranda by F. W. Albrecht and translated and published by his son, Pastor Paul Albrecht. We are not told where the original and translated manuscripts are held nor where the transcript was published (it is actually Appendix 2, pp. 237-300, of Albrecht 2002). The author of this work, Peter Latz, has imposed a chronological order on the story and added much supplementary material to contextualise the life of Moses. He has included a map of the region, and indicated on it the travels undertaken by Moses. He also includes in the appendix a timeline of Moses' life, correlating Moses' activities with mission activities and indications of seasonal conditions and health issues in the respective years. The book also includes 28 photos, endnotes to each chapter, and a list of references. The front cover features a coloured photograph of Moses standing at the front of his church at Jay Creek; the back cover includes a photograph of the dedication of his new church in 1941.

The author is well equipped to write such an account, although he admits to not being a historian. Peter Latz, son of lay missionaries, grew up at Hermannsburg speaking Aranda and plugged into a network of Aranda boys. He personally remembers Moses, who died when he was twelve years old. His account of mission activities relies on other histories of the mission, as he acknowledges (p. 3). The story is considerably enriched by Latz's own knowledge of Aranda culture and worldview and his 'intimate knowledge of the landscape and its plants and animals, acquired over a lifetime of travels and scientific enquiry' (p. 3). Latz is best known for his work on Central Australian botany and traditional landscape management (Latz 1995, 2007). This scientific knowledge of land and climate is evident in the many references to rainfall, drought, bushfires, etc and their impact on the Aboriginal community.

Tjalkabota was born about 1872, just a few years before the founding of the Hermannsburg mission in Western Arrernte territory. As a boy he attended the mission school intermittently, when not working as a shepherd, and when an adolescent received instruction in the Christian faith, selecting the name Moses when he was baptised. He helped the missionary Carl Strehlow with learning Aranda and with translating the scriptures into Aranda. After he lost his sight at the age of 30 because of measles, he took on a much greater role in teaching younger Christians and helping with Bible translation. When Rev. Strehlow died in 1922, Moses assumed a more prominent role in leadership, story-telling, teaching and preaching. Eventually he took the initiative in becoming a travelling evangelist to other communities, being known as 'the messenger', and functioned as the de facto pastor of a congregation at Jay Creek, although he was not ordained as a minister. He was one of a group of elders who worked with Ted Strehlow on his revision of his father's translation of the Aranda New Testament.

His biographer suggests that Moses had become convinced that his people might not survive physically unless they changed some of their traditional practices, such as the payback killings, sexual promiscuity which led to venereal diseases and infertility, violence against women, and neglect of children. Acceptance of the Christian message and lifestyle, on the other hand, offered social as well as personal salvation.

It is a pity that we do not have transcripts of Moses' story-telling, teaching, sermons, debates with traditionalists, etc. This account nevertheless provides a welcome Indigenous perspective on mission history and intercultural contact. Among other things, it illustrates rather powerfully the role of Indigenous agency in the mission enterprise.

References

- Albrecht, Paul GE 2002, *From Mission to Church, 1877-2002: Finke River Mission*, Finke River Mission, [Hermannsburg, N.T.].
- Amadio, Nadine [et al] 1986, *Albert Namatjira: The Life and Work of an Australian Painter*, Macmillan, South Melbourne.
- Austin-Broos, Diane 2009, *Arrernte Present, Arrernte Past: Invasion, Violence, and Imagination in Indigenous Central Australia*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Batty, Joyce D 1963, *Namatjira: Wanderer Between Two Worlds*, Hodder and Stoughton, Melbourne.
- Henson, Barbara 1994, *A Straight-out Man: F.W. Albrecht and Central Australia Aborigines*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

BOOK REVIEWS

- Hill, Barry 2002, *Broken Song: T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession*, Random House, Sydney.
- Kenny, Anna 2014, *The Aranda's Pepa: An Introduction to Carl Strehlow's Masterpiece Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien (1907-1920)*, ANU E Press, Canberra.
- Latz, Peter K 1995, *Bushfires and Bushtucker: Aboriginal Plant Use in Central Australia*, IAD Press, Alice Springs:
- 2007, *The Flaming Desert: Arid Australia – a Fire Shaped Landscape*, The author [distributed by IAD Press], Alice Springs.
- Marcus, Julie 2001, *The Indomitable Miss Pink: A Life in Anthropology*, UNSW Press, Sydney.
- Mulvaney, John and JH Calaby 1985, *So Much That Is New, Baldwin Spencer, 1860-1929, a Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.
- Mulvaney, John, Howard Morphy, and Alison Petch (eds) 1997, *'My dear Spencer': The Letters of F. J. Gillen to Baldwin Spencer*, Hyland House, Melbourne.
- Ross, Alexander Donald Pwerle and Terry Whitebeach 2007, *The Versatile Man: The Life and Times of Don Ross, Kaytetye Stockman*, IAD Press, Alice Springs.
- Rubuntja, Wenten and Jenny Green 2002, *The Town Grew Up Dancing: The Life and Art of Wenten Rubuntja*, IAD Press, Alice Springs:
- Strehlow, John 2011, *The Tale of Frieda Keysser– Frieda Keysser and Carl Strehlow: An Historical Biography*, Wildcat, London.
- Strehlow, TGH 1969, *Journey to Horseshoe Bend*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney.
- Harold Koch
The Australian National University

Calling the Shots: Aboriginal Photographies by Jane Lydon, 256 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2014, ISBN 9781922059598, \$39.95.

Calling the Shots is a compilation of essays telling Aboriginal stories through the lens of photography. It includes both historical and present-day practices, thus asserting the continuity between past and present that is possible through photography. In recent decades, photography has been viewed one-dimensionally as a tool wielded by settler society to objectify and control Aboriginal people throughout the history of settlers encountering them. Although this book does not shy away from telling stories of subjugation and control, it presents a multifaceted picture of Aboriginal empowerment in the face of oppression, emphasising how different Aboriginal groups have appropriated the medium of photography for purposes that are highly relevant and meaningful. The book is structured geographically, with a section for each state/territory (excepting the Australian Capital Territory) and at least one chapter in each section.

A strong theme of *Calling the Shots* is linking with ancestors through photographs. Identification of who is pictured in a photograph is crucial to this connection. In the section on New South Wales, Barkindji woman Zena Cumpston highlights this important element. In reference to Frederick Bonney,¹ who recorded the names and relationships of people he photographed on Momba station in the late 19th century, Cumpston says,

Bonney's photographs don't give me a cold, sad feeling like almost all other early photos of Aboriginal people I have seen ... these people are not lost, they are not ghosts, or continually passively posing in a way that foregrounds unequal power relationships – we can place them, watch them living in their time, we can know who they are, we can claim them and with them a part of ourselves, our culture and our survival (p. 72).

This crucial connection comes up throughout the book, from multiple stories of people regaining continuity that was broken with the stolen generation, to the indescribable elation of a woman who saw a documentary about photograph repatriation and realised one of the photographs was of her great-great-grand-aunt.

In line with the balanced perspective which is a strong feature of the book, *Calling the Shots* includes stories on how photographs of Aboriginal people were used for settler political purposes. Two styles of photography with contrasting purposes feature throughout the book. One style of photography shows Aboriginal people looking 'traditional'; for example, holding spears and not wearing clothes – even in cases where the people pictured were more integrated into the settler lifestyle. This was to capture what was considered a 'dying race' for academic purposes

1 For his photographs see a work not cited in Jane Lydon's book, Jeanette Hope and Robert Lindsay, *The People of the Paroo River: Frederic Bonney's Photographs*, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, Sydney, 2011.

and prove the racial inferiority of Aboriginal people, in line with the social Darwinism prevalent at the time. The other common photographic style shows Aboriginal people on mission stations, wearing contemporary clothing. The purpose of this style of photography was to prove the possibility of 'civilising' and 'Christianising' Aboriginal people. In the first case, photography was used to justify genocide. In the latter, to argue for assimilation.

Calling the Shots tells many stories of photographs being used beyond their original, often oppressive, intent. For example, there is a story from the Ngarrindjeri people in South Australia of two boys who were taken by the state in 1910 under false pretences. They were photographed in Edwardian garb for the purposes of promoting propaganda about 'civilising' Aboriginal children away from their family influence. This photograph and others like it are treasured by their descendants, including the daughter of one of the boys, who keeps a poster-sized print of the portrait on her bedroom wall. Stories like these emphasise that though histories of Aboriginal Australia are brutal, they are not the end of the story. Photographs of Aboriginal people reveal more than intended by the photographer, and take on different meanings for their descendants who reclaim them.

Settlers were not the only ones behind the camera. Also from the Ngarrindjeri people is the story from the 1950s of Aunt Charlotte, an independent woman who took photographs of her community that are greatly treasured by her family because they are representative of how her people lived. Today, photography is more accessible and there are many Aboriginal people, especially senior women, featured in the book who incorporate treasured photographic collections into their oral storytelling practices. A whole chapter is dedicated to photographs used by Wiradjuri women in this way.

Calling the Shots is a compelling read, providing a nuanced approach to a sensitive topic. It is an important contribution to combat what the book refers to as 'colonial amnesia' — a tendency for settler Australia to forget or ignore the histories of Aboriginal Australia. I recommend it to all readers interested in history, and especially to the ever-growing number of Aboriginal people who are compiling family histories.

Emmeline Tyler

The Australian National University

Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance: Protecting Aborigines across the Nineteenth-Century British Empire by Alan Lester and Fae Dussart, 291 pp, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2014, ISBN 9781107007833 (hbk), \$145.00.

The Brits' IP of R2P: the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) is the most recent international principle that emerged out of a United Nations hamstrung in the face of violations of human rights in sovereign nations – Rwanda, the Balkans, Syria. Or could it be a ricochet from the protectionism of the British empire colonising indigenous sovereign spaces? Lester and Dussart argue that the history of humanitarianism is in itself worthy of historical investigation, and that the nineteenth-century idea of 'protection' is at the root of modern development discourse. In the Western world the Christian concept of a brotherhood of man, which inspired early humanitarian interventions in colonial violence and injustice, has been replaced by a secular and ever-expanding 'circle of we' propelling an 'unprecedented interest in humanitarian intervention' in any part of the world, be it our business or not.

The influence of the British abolitionists in Exeter Hall, transforming themselves into societies for the protection of Aborigines, has long been acknowledged in Australian historiography, but this book frames colonial government agents in a humanitarian perspective, starting with those two *bêtes noires* of Tasmanian history – Governor George Arthur and Protector G. A. Robinson.

Arthur is described as an evangelical Tory who thought in terms of the rights of 'subjects', not rights of 'citizens'. His fear of revolution and of unsettling democratic ambitions steered him always to 'amelioration' rather than anything that might change the balance of powers. Indeed, 'governmental humanitarianism was conditioned by a reactionary fear of democracy and revolution' (p. 30). Arthur became wary of self-serving settlers and their well-rehearsed arguments during his period in Jamaica where he was confronted with the outrages of slavery. He reinvented the office of commissioners in crown colonies as protectors of slaves, soon afterwards enshrined in the *Ameliorative Code* of 1824 (p. 54). In Honduras he challenged the settler-magistrates interpreting the law in favour of slave-abusers and was subsequently hounded to the point of nervous breakdown.

During the high tide of convict transportation, Arthur was recruited to Tasmania on the strength of his reputation as the 'anti-slavery governor' to oversee the assignment of convict labour to free settlers. Aboriginal Tasmanians were soon outnumbered, decimated and displaced, and when the 'Black Line' military operation failed to bring them in, Governor Arthur appointed Protector Robinson whose 'friendly mission' tour to recruit Tasmanian Aborigines to the Flinders Island reservation is symptomatic of conciliation (between 'defiant sovereign indigenous people', settler onslaught and humanitarian concerns).

'Conciliation', stamped on the book cover in the image of G. A. Robinson and Tasmanian Aborigines at Bruny Island, was a model that Lord Glenelg thought

useful for 'elsewhere in the Empire' and the 'elsewhere' soon materialised with an unauthorised settler rush on Port Phillip, to which Robinson was posted as Protector (p. 76).

Using the transnational biographies of Governor George Arthur and Governor George Grey as their 'bookends', Lester and Dussart reach out to other parts of the British empire to identify shifting approaches of the 'ruthless benevolence' of humanitarian governance, from amelioration to conciliation to protection to amalgamation, always underlining how the 'responsibility to protect' was not a natural imprint on governmentality. They draw the bough of intervention from slave workers to convict workers to indigenous people as potential workers, with 'the protector' as a central figure to the mid-19th century, when the first phase of an indigenous protectorate declined under the onslaught of the evolution-fever infecting British science on the one hand, and the growth of settler autonomous governments on the other. Replacing protectionism, the origins of a proto-developmental discourse emerge in Arthur's cotton plantations and model farms in northern India in the wake of the first Afghan war which, incidentally, Arthur found 'difficult to reconcile with our notions of justice' and probably unnecessary, but certainly 'burdensome for many years to come' (p. 270).

Tracing the origins of the British 'responsibility to protect', and skipping over the Protectors of Chinese and many inquiries into conditions of indentured workers towards the end of the 19th century, the authors maintain an ambivalent slant on 'humanitarian governance' as one that seems always firmly grounded in self-interest and artful dodging (a label appended to George Grey by his biographer in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*). In the end they risk offending grassroots activism, which often protests that governments are acting 'not in our name', by agreeing with M. Barnett (2011: 223) that 'the level of organized compassion increases at the very moment when death and destruction indict the humanity of the compassionate' (p. 274). This book lacks a Bibliography and a map to help the reader who has not followed Alan Lester, who has been writing about colonial philanthropy and humanitarianism in the British empire circuits for some 15 years.

Reference

Barnett, M 2011, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Regina Ganter
Griffith University

Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country by Giordano Nanni and Andrea James, 224 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2013, ISBN 9781922059390 (pbk), \$29.95.

The story of the Coranderrk Aboriginal Reserve and the campaign of its residents for justice and self-determination has been the subject of great interest among scholars in the field of Aboriginal history. From its inception in 1863 to its official closure in 1924, Coranderrk's history is a rich and complex one; it became not only a vibrant centre for the Kulin peoples of central Victoria and for refugees from more distant clans, but also the focal point of often bitter debate among settler Victorians about the destiny of the Aboriginal population. Certainly the most dramatic point in this story was the 1881 Parliamentary Inquiry on Coranderrk, which investigated the conditions and management of the reserve. Unique among nineteenth-century commissions of inquiry due to the prevalence of Aboriginal voices, it brought the plight of the Kulin into the mainstream of public opinion and revealed the resilience, adaptability, and political sophistication of Victoria's Aboriginal population. The immediate result was the removal of Coranderrk's manager and an abandonment of the Protection Board's plan to close the reserve and relocate its residents to a remote location on the Murray River. It was a major victory for the Kulin, who believed that Queen Victoria had granted Coranderrk to them in perpetuity.

Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country, by Giordano Nanni and Andrea James, is a companion book to an eponymous theatre production, which was conceived by Nanni and developed in collaboration with James as part of the Australian Research Council-funded 'Minutes of Evidence' project. The book is an excellent record of an innovative verbatim theatre performance, which had successful seasons in Melbourne and Sydney. The performance (which I attended in Melbourne in February 2012) drew its text almost exclusively from the Minutes of Evidence of the 1881 inquiry. It started its life as a simple reading of excerpts, but evolved into an intricately staged performance that gave life and vitality to a highly significant historical document.

The first chapter of Nanni and James' fine book provides a scholarly but accessible history of the Coranderrk reserve, with a focus on the events leading up to the 1881 Inquiry. This is followed by a carefully annotated version of the script. Each scene begins with an introduction that provides biographical details on the witness being examined and some reflections on the significance of the testimony. When combined with the script itself, these introductions amount to a fascinating and insightful history of the Inquiry itself. At the end of each scene there is a detailed record of even the most minor editorial changes; moreover, the sequential numbering of questions from the Minutes of Evidence is preserved in the margins of the script. A great value of this structure is that it allows the reader to ponder the choices made by Nanni and James about which testimony to include, and how to reorder the selected material to achieve a coherent narrative that is both historically sound and dramatically compelling.

The annotations identify the few moments when the script departs from the Minutes of Evidence; for example, to include extracts from letters and petitions from Coranderrk residents, or proceedings from the Inquiry that were excised from the minutes but published in the press. A good example of the latter is the heated exchange between Edward M. Curr, a prominent member of the Board for Protection of Aborigines and a key advocate of the closure of Coranderrk, and Anne Bon, an ally of the Kulin and one of the commissioners. It is very clear from the annotations that the script was carefully researched and thoughtfully prepared.

In some instances, the reordering of questions in the script adds a layer of meaning. For example, the testimony of Rev. Frederick Strickland, the Coranderrk manager, opens with a series of questions and answers about the number of Aborigines at Coranderrk, their tribal affiliations, and proportion of Aboriginal heritage. The annotations show that these are faithfully based on questions 1 to 10 in the Minutes of Evidence, with only minor edits. The script then jumps to questions 74–75, about the numbers of cattle on the station, before returning to the earlier part of Strickland's testimony. This editorial intervention might imply equivalence in the mind of the questioner between Aborigines and cattle, which is not in itself apparent in the Minutes of Evidence, even if it fits more broadly with what we know about the history of Aboriginal enumeration. Such changes (and they are quite rare) might serve a dramatic purpose in an actual performance, but to some extent they undermine the script's claim to be verbatim theatre. Nevertheless, it is to their credit that Nanni and James have opted for transparency on these issues. By laying bare their editorial decisions in the annotated script, the book becomes a valuable study of theatre as a genre of history making.

The third chapter describes the aftermath of the Inquiry, noting that the victory of the Kulin was short-lived, as a new policy of removing 'half-castes' from Victorian Aboriginal reserves was soon enshrined in the *Aborigines Act 1886* (Vic). As Nanni and James explain, this policy was an alternative means for the Protection Board to achieve its ultimate goal: 'Having failed to break up Coranderrk, it now sought ways to break up "the Aborigines"' (p. 182). The authors then give a brief account of the decline of Coranderrk and its closure by the government in the 1920s, while also pointing to station's enduring legacy and its links with subsequent campaigns for Aboriginal rights.

Chapter 4 describes the making of the theatrical production. In particular it notes the influence of the genre of 'tribunal theatre', which is usually based on the official transcripts of judicial proceedings. The authors reflect briefly on their attempt to 'balance the needs of history and theatre' (p. 193) to create an 80-minute script from the more than 5,000 questions and answers in the Minutes of Evidence. Interestingly, many of their editorial decisions are justified in both historiographical and dramaturgical terms. Although they hint at the 'creative tensions' inherent in such a collaborative, cross-cultural and inter-disciplinary project, some more detailed discussion of these tensions would have been welcome.

BOOK REVIEWS

Diane Barwick's intricately detailed *Rebellion at Coranderrk* (1998) will remain a key source for historians, but *Coranderrk: We Will Show the Country* (both book and play) will undoubtedly take the remarkable story of Coranderrk to a wider audience. It has the potential to strengthen Aboriginal communities today, by countering the dominant settler-colonial narrative of passive Aboriginal decline, and painting an alternative picture of resilience and self-determination. For all these reasons, Nanni and James's book is a fine monument to an innovative, sophisticated, and profoundly moving piece of history making.

Samuel Furphy

The Australian National University

Country of the Heart: An Indigenous Australian Homeland by Deborah Bird Rose with Nancy Daiyi, Kathy Deveraux, Margaret Daiyi, Linda Ford and April Bright, 161 + xiv pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2011, Second Edition, ISBN 9780855757762 (pbk), \$44.95.

Country of the Heart is a collaboration between anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose, eco-photographer Sharon D'Amico and five Marrithiel and Marrananggu women from the Wagait floodplain and savanna country south-west of Darwin – Nancy Daiyi, Kathy Deveraux, Margaret Daiyi, Linda Ford and April Bright. Deborah Bird Rose weaves her ethnographic, biographical and historical commentary around transcripts of texts and conversations from her five co-authors based on D'Amico's photographs of their land, their families and a string of visits to a range of different places in their country. The meandering and alternating commentaries explore the relationships of the Mak Mak clan with their land across a number of generations. The stories about events at particular places are contextualised by ethnographic descriptions of Mak Mak society and cosmology. The network of relationships amongst people, and people and places, is presented from multiple perspectives which are all unified by accounts of how people respond affectively to these relationships. This is a distinguishing feature of this work – a dialogic approach that attempts to capture a sense of how the Mak Mak people respond emotionally to their country. The combination of anthropological commentary together with transcriptions of the voices of the Aboriginal land owners themselves is a novel and welcome collaborative format.

North Australian Indigenous people are now increasingly engaged in a growing land management movement that is part of the so-called hybrid economies. These are combinations of market and state economic activities in combination with customary practices such as hunting, food gathering and the use of fire as a culturally motivated land management practice. This is in fact what is being described in this book as food gathering trips, descriptions of hunting excursions and work in the cattle industry are presented as ways that the Mak Mak people interact with the land that sustains them emotionally as well as economically. These activities are central to the way that many Indigenous groups are now forging their own modernity whilst still sending very clear messages about retaining a sense of cultural continuity with the past. Such hybrid economic activity and the psychological health afforded by such connections are dependent on access to or continuing residence on the land of one's heritage. One point that this book tacitly makes is that government policy based on the assumption that whole populations of remote Aboriginal people can be moved to 'where the jobs are located' such as into 'Territory growth towns' is doomed to failure if the affective dimensions of relationships with land are ignored.

The early chapters are a tour through the floodplains and riverine landscapes of 'the Wagait' region and the kinds of attachments the Mak Mak people have with these places. This tour is not limited to the physical features of the land, but includes the mythological significance of places and the 'Dreaming' beings that created them. Communication with non-human features of the landscape is

frequently framed with the use of the term 'a sentient landscape'. Whether this assumes a view of Aboriginal spirituality as a form of animism or as ancestor religion is not explored, but there is plenty of material here on this subject to incite further debate.

Chapter names and sections have a poetic ring to them – 'action-connection', 'country tells you', 'tracks and lives', 'presence' etc. Indeed, certain collaboratively authored texts which attempt to capture numinous qualities of 'the Dreaming' and their totemic essence in the country are presented as poetry (p. 135):

My strength

The strength of that land

You can feel it in yourself, you belong there.

It's your country, your dust, your place.

You remember the old people.

The white eagles always greet me.

It's home...

Biographies of Indigenous Australians in remote parts of Australia are rare for a number of reasons, including the more obvious explanation that these are cultures with oral not written traditions. Here we have the biography of a family detailing the love they have of their land and it is satisfying to see images of family members captioned with their actual names. This is in stark contrast to the photographs of the frequently unnamed objects of anthropological enquiry in ethnographies of half a century ago. In keeping with the Indigenous preference for association in forms of person reference, there are also occasional notes in the captions on how the person depicted is related to the authors or others mentioned in the text. This work, however, aims for a more general readership outside of the confines of academic discourse, and as a result there is an avoidance here of the kind of complex analytical language that often ends up removing us further from the very world that it seeks to tease apart. This is one advantage of the growing field of collaborative anthropology whereby the objective is to produce ethnographic texts with local community consultants as active collaborators and contributors in the writing process. *Country of the Heart* is a good example of this kind of collaborative ethnography. The result is writing in the tradition of Gary Snyder – a holistic synthesis of Indigenous environmental philosophy, religion, ethnographic description and poetry that highlights the aesthetic aspects of emotional experience.

Murray Garde

The Australian National Univeristy

Dark Emu, Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident by Bruce Pascoe, 175 pp, Magabala Books, Broome, Western Australia, 2014, ISBN 9781922142436 (pbk), \$35.00.

In an article published in 1969 archaeologist Rhys Jones used the term 'fire-stick farming' to describe the ways in which Aboriginal people used fire to manage their environment. Bill Gammage's 2011 prize-winning book *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* presents a detailed analysis of the complex and sophisticated ways in which Aboriginal people have managed and maintained Australia's diverse landscapes since before European arrival. In these works, and in what is by now an extensive literature on this subject, it is well recognised that Australia's Indigenous people, throughout the thousands of years of their adaptation and survival in this land, have not only made wise use of fire, but have managed the whole range of natural resources and ecological systems to sustain successful and sophisticated societies throughout a very diverse range of landscapes and environments. This sustainable management of country, coupled with an intimate knowledge of the seasonal cycles, has enabled them to develop pliable economies.

Bruce Pascoe enters this debate with his new book *Dark Emu*. He argues that the techniques and strategies Aboriginal peoples employed in their use and management of their environments and resources equate to agriculture and farming. But his argument goes deeper. In calling for a re-evaluation of the economic modes of Australia's Indigenous people, Pascoe is asserting that Australia as a nation should, historically, have embraced more profoundly the highly successful and sophisticated nature of Indigenous cultures and societies. The book articulates this point more clearly in the last two chapters.

Pascoe begins to set out the premise to his book in the Introduction, in which he argues for a re-evaluation of the Indigenous economy, from being perceived as a 'primitive' hunter-gatherer society, to one that is far more complex. He has amassed a wealth of evidence to support his contention that Indigenous people, before European arrivals, maintained a sophisticated economy which featured aspects of farming practices and settled lifestyles including permanent settlements with established dwellings.

Pascoe harnesses the historical records of colonial observers of such activities by Indigenous people as seed selection, soil preparation, crop harvesting, eel and fish harvesting, storage of surplus crops, and the establishment of large, settled populations in semi-permanent dwellings. He pursues his argument with discussion on a wide range of ways that Indigenous people modified the environment and its resources including aquaculture, and through the important role of fire. In later chapters, Pascoe's ambitious project also encompasses discussion of Indigenous cosmology, language and law in support of his thesis that Indigenous people maintained settled, stable and sophisticated farming and agricultural societies.

The notion that Aboriginal people practiced a sophisticated economy which included various ways of modifying the environment is not new, and is the subject of recent scholarship. Gammage for example, discussing 'farms without fences' (Chapter 10), writes 'some researchers see nascent farming in these various practices from tilling to trading' (p. 296). Gammage puts it well when he states of pre-European Aboriginal society that 'people farmed in 1788, but were not farmers', since, he explains 'these are not the same: one is an activity, the other a lifestyle' (p. 281). In Gammage's analysis, the economic mode of Aboriginal people, with its sophisticated combination of hunter-gatherer and more resource intensive practices, embraces particular ways of thinking about, and relating to, the environment, as well as the daily activities of resource use and exploitation. In this scheme, the key to success for sustainable Aboriginal economic livelihoods lies in maintaining a balance between mobility, and more settled modes.

The debate is taken up too by historian John Hirst in his recent book *Australian History in 7 Questions*. Hirst poses as his first question 'Why did Aborigines not become farmers?' His discussion on this raises many questions, such as whether Aboriginal people made an intentional choice to reject agriculture. Again, I think it is not a question as to why Aboriginal people did not take up farming; rather, the point is to look at what it is about the particularities of Aboriginal peoples' economic systems that enabled them to maintain these successfully for such a long time and in such diverse ecosystems and climates. The sophistication of hunter-gatherer economies was well articulated in 1972 in Marshall Sahlins' seminal *Stone Age Economics*, which posited that hunter gatherer economies were the 'original affluent society'. It is not necessary to 're-think' or to 're-classify' Australian Indigenous people as farmers and horticulturalists in order to be able to embrace the sophistication of their economies. Nor should it be necessary to re-classify Australia's Indigenous people as farmers in order to contest the racialised and prejudicial attitudes still inherent in many layers of society towards Indigenous people. Whether 'hunter-gatherer', 'horticulturalist', or 'farmer', the label is not the issue: the point is to emphasise the qualities of Aboriginal peoples' economies and lifestyles as they are, as complex, adaptive, flexible and innovative. Certainly, as *Dark Emu* shows, there is a wealth of evidence that demonstrates the extraordinary innovative capacities of their societies, including in their material technology (see for example my own work in *Writing Heritage* on this latter point).

Dark Emu is not Pascoe's first foray into this subject. In his earlier book *Convincing Ground* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007) he refers to pre-European 'Indigenous agricultural practices' (p. 82), the presence of organised fish traps and stone dwellings (pp. 125–126), and horticultural practices such as grain harvesting and storage (p. 173). But *Dark Emu* asks the wrong question. It is not a matter of whether Indigenous peoples were hunter-gatherers or agriculturalists. The point – which Pascoe's book does make – is rather to re-evaluate the specific nature of Indigenous economies, and to call for a societal re-evaluation that acknowledges the sophistication, complexity and malleability of these economies. Pascoe

articulates this more directly in the later chapters of *Dark Emu*. He writes (at p. 129) that 'arguing over whether the Aboriginal economy was a hunter-gatherer system or one of burgeoning agriculture is not the central issue'. He is correct here in suggesting that 'the crucial point is that we have never discussed it as a nation'. This is where he reminds us of his central contention, in suggesting that 'the belief that Aboriginal people were "mere" hunter-gatherers has been used as a political tool to justify dispossession'.

Thinking in that way, as with Hirst's question 'why weren't Aboriginal people farmers', implies an outmoded hierarchical view of advancement or progress in which civilised, settled agricultural societies represented the highest point. The point is not to ask why Aboriginal people did not 'advance' to farming and agricultural societies. Rather, it is more productive to seek a better understanding of the particular range of modalities of Aboriginal peoples' livelihoods, which embraced a wide range of techniques and technologies for harnessing the available resources and environments. As Pascoe correctly discusses in his concluding chapters, sustaining a complex and pliable resource economy required more than tangible assets and techniques; it also necessitated the right balance between the sacred and the corporeal – religion, kinship, language and societal norms and values were all part of the complex amalgam that enabled Indigenous people to pursue their adaptable and innovative livelihoods. The important role of Indigenous peoples' unique relationships to the land was well articulated some time ago by Deborah Bird Rose, who drew attention to a specific Aboriginal 'land ethic'. This relationship is a significant element in the particular ways that Indigenous peoples successfully maintained a complex, sustainable livelihood in diverse and changing ecosystems.

Overall *Dark Emu* is an important and well argued book. Pascoe's impressive use of the historical record to advance his thesis is particularly commendable. But his reliance on secondary sources and compilations, through which he accesses the works of colonial observers is puzzling. So too is his over-reliance on the work of the late Rupert Gerritsen. Why this excessive use of Gerritsen and other recent syntheses, rather than going to the primary sources themselves?

Unfortunately *Dark Emu* is also marred by some clumsy passages, occasional questionable style, and poor editing. Pascoe's frequent use of 'Aboriginals' is notably problematic, where today Indigenous people prefer designations such as Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islander people, and, where possible, the specific language or cultural group's name. Despite these problems, this is an important book that advances a powerful argument for re-evaluating the sophistication of Aboriginal peoples' economic and socio-political livelihoods, and calls for Australia to embrace the complexity, sophistication and innovative skills of Indigenous people into its concept of itself as a nation.

References

- Davis, Michael 2007, *Writing Heritage: The Depiction of Indigenous Heritage in European-Australian Writings*, Australian Scholarly Publishing and the National Museum of Australia Press, Melbourne and Canberra.
- Gammage, Bill 2011, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, New South Wales.
- Hirst, John 2014, *Australia History in 7 Questions*, Black Inc, Collingwood, Victoria.
- Jones, R 1969, 'Firestick farming', *Australian Natural History* 16: 224–228.
- Pascoe, B 2007, *Convincing Ground: Learning to Fall in Love with your Country*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra.
- Rose, Deborah Bird 1988, 'Exploring an Aboriginal land ethic', *Meanjin* 3: 378–386.
- Sahlins, Marshall 1972, *Stone Age Economics*, Aldine-Atherton Inc, Chicago and New York.
- Michael Davis
University of Sydney

Darwin by Tess Lea, 290 pp, New South Publishing, Sydney, 2014, ISBN 9781742233864 (hbk), \$29.99.

This attractive looking book is one of a series focusing on Australia's capital cities (Alice Springs gets its own book, as well). Although currently living in Sydney, author Tess Lea grew up in Darwin and until a few years ago worked at the Northern Territory's only university. The extensive bibliography shows the book has been well-researched, yet Lea's account is highly personal, as she often relies on her own recollections and those of family and friends. She has also sought out the accounts of other local people to bring to life various parts of the story she wishes to tell. The result is an engaging book that presents us with first-hand accounts of significant events in Darwin's history, such as the devastation caused by Cyclone Tracy in 1974, which Tess Lea experienced as a young girl.

Lea acknowledges that there are many Darwin stories omitted from her account, such as the dramatic defection at the height of the Cold War of Evdokia Petrov at Darwin Airport in 1954, and the headline-grabbing trial of Lindy Chamberlain in 1982, where Chamberlain was found guilty of murdering her daughter Azaria. Lea argues, however, that in these cases Darwin was merely a coincidental venue for events that had no connection to the essential character of the place. Lea also admits that she has given little attention to political figures or other prominent local identities. Instead, she says her method has been to highlight Darwin's uniqueness by focusing on individuals whose stories are used to illustrate her themes of 'disasters and reinvention, real and imagined dangers, how the place is lived and where it is going'.

To address these themes Lea's own recollections provide much of the contemporary part of her narrative. Her father, who grew up in post-war Darwin and later became a drover, provides war-time stories about Lea's grandfather and tales of his own life in a frontier town and the outback. In the meantime, Lea's children bear the surname Moo, connecting her to some of the most venerable Darwin Chinese families; today highly respected, but once feared for the threat they posed to White Australia. Lea also made contact with some of Darwin's best known Aboriginal families and adds their stories as well. Beyond this, Lea conducted interviews with people as varied as a barramundi specialist, fishing being of great interest to many Darwinites; an entomologist, to get the story on the mosquitoes that plagued early settlers and still cause concern because of their potential to spread disease; and members of the Australian military, as a major theme of Lea's book is Darwin's role as a garrison town and the apparent media and public indifference to the growing United States military presence.

Lea's training in anthropology no doubt helped her conduct her interviews and gain an understanding of her informants' perspectives. However, her use of some other material and the conclusions she draws from it is not always as convincing. For example, she claims that 'The humble mosquito killed off the first three attempts at northern settlement' (p. 48), but gives no evidence for

this bold statement; mosquito-borne diseases were a feature of most tropical European outposts of the day and would have been endured in the Top End as well if the settlements had been considered worthwhile, but they were not and were abandoned for other reasons. Later, referring to the 1918 Darwin Rebellion, Lea says that 'locals menaced Administrator Gilruth so thoroughly he fled his post' (p. 123), whereas the truth is that Gilruth was too thick-skinned to be intimidated and only left after being recalled by the government in February 1919. Elsewhere, Lea's loose prose could unintentionally lead to misapprehensions, such as the White Australia policy being the result of the threat caused by the 'thrifty and industrious Chinese population' of Port Darwin (p. 54), whereas of course this was a nationwide phenomenon; or the traditional owners of the Darwin region, the Larrakia, being responsible for Aboriginal people being able to 'determine the electoral fate of the Northern Territory government' (p. 55), whereas the Larrakia account for only a portion of the Territory Indigenous vote and Aboriginal members of the local parliament have mainly been non-Larrakia from the regional areas.

These misgivings aside, the book is generally persuasive and those who know Darwin will recognise it through Lea's descriptions. Lea's view of Darwin and her interpretation of 'the Darwin lifestyle' is not one that will be wholly agreed with by all Darwinites and others may have chosen to highlight different aspects of Australia's sole tropical capital city. But in this book Tess Lea has nevertheless provided an overview of Darwin that should intrigue outsiders and provoke introspection in those who live there or have ever lived there.

Steven Farram

Charles Darwin University

Dharmalan Dana: An Australian Aboriginal man's 73-Year Search for the Story of his Aboriginal and Indian Ancestors by George Nelson and Robynne Nelson, 364 pp, ANU Press, Canberra, 2014, ISBN 9781925021493 (pbk), \$45.00.

This book tells how the grandchildren of King Billy, a Waywurru man, and of Samson Peersahib, an Indian Mauritian, crossed paths in Yorta Yorta country and of how their descendants lived as Aboriginal people in modern Australia. The author, George Nelson, a Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung man, tells the story of his family to show how his experiences are part of a larger, longer story of Aboriginal perseverance, still unfolding in the lives of family members today. Nelson's research into his family raises questions about 'Grampa James', the Indian (or was he Mauritian?) teacher and preacher Thomas Shadrach James, a man of respect and renown through Aboriginal communities but also a man whose origins remained mysterious, until now. The book is also the story of Nelson's literal lifetime of research, searching for Grampa.

Nelson writes in a more autobiographical than academic style. His tone is warm and familial. Many of his stories are memories passed down by family members. The book is littered with notes from Robynne Nelson, his daughter, as she gives an alternative perspective, revealing her thoughts and frustrations in the research process, providing additional flourishes, detail and nuance. The interplay between the father's and daughter's voices brings a fresh dynamic feel; I felt I could hear them yarning together, interrupting at times, elaborating at others.

It begins with accounts of Nelson's ancestors and their families, complete with stunning photographs. It covers family births, marriages and tragedies until the time of his own boyhood in Mooroopna in the 1930s. The number of names and family connections was somewhat overwhelming as an outsider. I was glad for the various family trees later in the book. Nelson tells stories his father told about his Yorta Yorta ancestors: their hunting and fishing, names and language. He does not shy away from the troubles in his parents' marriage. During the War, his father tried to enlist, but his mother's ill-health prevented him from leaving. Nelson also recalls his memories of Grampa James — his presence, his bush remedies and healing treatments, his writing desk and his Bible — noticing that 'although he was black he was a different "kind" of black to us Aboriginal people'. At age seven, he began his 'little mission' to find out about Grampa.

The second section continues Nelson's autobiography, beginning with his marriage to his sweetheart, Brenda from Cummeragunga. He worked in the flour mill and bought a house in Echuca. The family grew. We learn about Nanny Pris, who taught Nelson what Grampa used to tell her: 'we are as good as white people!' This conviction drives Nelson's athletics career. He becomes a successful runner who then goes on to train Aboriginal runners. Another major

event in Nelson's life is his scholarship to the University of Adelaide in 1988. He discovered archives full of sources on the Maloga mission and began a thesis on Grampa which, though unfinished, grew into this book.

The story then turns to Grampa himself. Nelson tells of how Grampa arrived at Maloga mission in 1881 as an assistant teacher. When the community was moved to Cummeragunga in 1888, Grampa moved too and continued as a school teacher. Grampa was a writer. He was constantly writing to government authorities asking for school equipment. He corresponded with R. H. Mathews, describing the various clan groups and providing a census. In Nelson's words, his strategy was 'to empower Aboriginal people to become great *leaders and writers*'. Grampa was also a preacher, a healer and an advocate. But tensions between Grampa and the station manager led to him being labelled a 'troublemaker'. He was dismissed from the school in 1922. Despite his role as educator of a generation of Aboriginal leaders, Nelson found, puzzlingly, his family knew little about Grampa's origins. Some said he was Indian, others Sri Lankan, still others said he came from Mauritius.

The next section opens up a larger story about networks of migration and cultural exchanges across the British Empire. Nelson goes with his daughter to Mauritius to uncover the truth about Grampa. The story is told from their perspective as their research unfolds such that the reader experiences the suspense and excitement. Unfortunately, this also meant including the dead ends of research which, at times, made for confusion as a reader. The detailed timeline in the appendices proved useful at this point. They eventually discover the story of James Peersahib, Grampa's father. Peersahib grew up in Madras. His parents diligently taught him the Quran, though he attended a Christian school. In 1854, he travelled to Mauritius as an indentured labourer where he converted to Christianity through association with the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Grampa was born in 1859 and educated by his father in the CMS School where he too became a teacher. But when Grampa's mother died, he fled, leaving for Australia in 1878. Shortly after arriving he began teaching at Maloga mission.

Finally, the book turns to Grampa's legacy. Participants in the Cummeragunga Walk Off, the Day of Mourning and authors of the 1935 petition to the King were Grampa's students. Nelson attributes Grampa's concern for Aboriginal people and brilliant teaching to his Islamic heritage, his knowledge of global racial inequalities, his awareness of international struggles against colonial oppression, his mission education and the model of his father, also an educator. I found here I wanted to know more. What did Grampa write about politics, faith, race or Empire? Though the book points to the significance of Grampa's transnational experience for his teaching and advocacy, there is scope for this to be explored in greater depth. The book closes with stories and photographs of Grampa's descendants, giving a sense of living history, still unfolding even now.

Though the book is primarily a family history, I commend it to those interested in histories of Aboriginal politics and Empire. Grampa's story is compelling and, importantly, sheds light on the ways Aboriginal communities have long been

BOOK REVIEWS

connected to global politics. The book will be essential reading for researchers of Cummeragunga or Maloga. It should also be of encouragement and interest to Aboriginal educators. The warmth with which its stories are told gives great insight into the personal experiences of those concerned. George Nelson's lifetime of research into Grampa reveals Grampa to be a towering figure in Aboriginal history. The book is a great achievement.

Laura Rademaker

The Australian National University

Dwoort Baal Kaat an old story retold by Kim Scott, Russell Nelly and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project, with artwork by Helen (Ing) Hall. Inspired by the story Bob Roberts told Gerhardt Laves in 1931 at Albany in Western Australia, 36 pp, UWA Publishing, Crawley, 2013, ISBN 9781742585116 (pbk), \$24.99.

Yira Boornak Nyininy an old story retold by Kim Scott, Hazel Brown, Roma Winmar and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project, with artwork by Anthony (Troy) Roberts. Inspired by the story Bob Roberts told Gerhardt Laves in 1931 at Albany in Western Australia, 36 pp, UWA Publishing, Crawley, 2013, ISBN 9781742585123 (pbk), \$24.99.

The two illustrated bilingual booklets, *Dwoort Baal Kaat* and *Yira Boornak Nyininy*, are narrated through the Noongar and English languages. They are part of an ongoing series inspired by stories told by Aboriginal men in Albany, south-western Western Australia, to a visiting American linguist, Gerhardt Laves, in the early 1930s. This series is being generated by the Wirlomin Noongar Stories and Language Project, an initiative which grew out of consultations about returning Laves' 1931 Noongar field notes to the descendents of the original Noongar storytellers (Scott et al 2006). Through the project, Noongar community members, including Kim Scott, the award-winning author and Professor of Writing at Curtin University, contribute to retelling these stories.

The booklets are beautifully produced with striking and stylish white-on-black covers. The artwork accompanying the stories not only looks great but it also illustrates the details of the storylines and enhances their readability for children. But although one readership is certain to be school-aged children, these booklets will be of note to many others, including those with an interest in histories, languages and cultures of and by Aboriginal peoples. *Dwoort Baal Kaat* and *Yira Boornak Nyininy* — along with the other booklets in the series — provide a particular example of community participation in reclaiming, reinvigorating and enriching returned historical materials. The story of the Wirlomin Noongar Stories and Language Project which is producing these bilingual booklets is fascinating in itself and deserves to be widely known for the processes and the choices behind the publication of each 'old story retold' by the project team.

Dwoort Baal Kaat (glossed as 'Dog his head') tells of a Noongar hunter who goes out hunting with a pack of dogs. However, these dogs keep eating all the prey, be it *yongka* 'kangaroo', *kwoora* 'wallaby', *wetj* 'emu' or *kwoka* 'quokka', leaving nothing for the hunter who becomes hungrier and hungrier. He eventually sets a circle of fire around these dogs, but they manage to break through the fire, and leap into the ocean to quench the flames. They swim east along the coast where the hunter's brother sees that they have become seals, dogs of the ocean.

In *Yira Boornak Nyininy* (glossed as 'High tree of sitting'), a woman tricks her husband into climbing up into a tall tree on a makeshift ladder to catch a possum for her. She then tells him she has fallen in love with a younger man and removes

the ladder so he is trapped up there for days, until he is rescued by a farmer. Together with the farmer, he tracks the woman down. When they find her he can see that she is happy. He decides to leave her to her new life, while he and the farmer recognise their friendship and call each other brother.

The Noongar narratives are glossed word by word in plain English. The English glosses are accessible to non-specialist readers because unfamiliar grammatical terminology is eschewed, plus there is a useful glossary at the back, along with a brief explanation of the origin of the orthography employed. To assist with pronunciation, a reading of the Noongar narrative is available for download from the website of the Wirlomin Noongar Stories and Language Project. The English 'through story' which accompanies the Noongar tale renders the Noongar story with the sparkle of good story telling. An engagingly told tale in English — which follows the original Noongar narrative, but not so slavishly as to be stilted — is an excellent decision, in my opinion, as it showcases the story-telling gifts of present-day Wirlomin Noongar story tellers too.

Introductory notes to each of these texts acknowledge which Noongar narrators were originally involved in telling the story to Gerhardt Laves when he was in Albany: *Yira Boornak Nyininy* was told by Bob Roberts and *Dwoort Baal Kaat* by George Nelly and Bob Roberts. These notes also explain how some of the original narrators' present-day descendants participated in the community workshops run by the Wirlomin Noongar Stories and Language Project that developed these booklets.

Laves, whose transcriptions, translations and notes provide the material for these texts, came to Australia on the recommendation of Edward Sapir, the renowned American linguist, to carry out fieldwork on Aboriginal languages from 1929–31. This fieldwork had been requested by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, the then Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney. Laves who had trained at the University of Chicago under Sapir in modern linguistic analysis and fieldwork methods undertook intensive study of six languages around Australia, from the north coast of New South Wales, the Daly River in the Northern Territory, around Broome in northern Western Australia, as well as the southern coast of Western Australia. The rich documentation carried out by Laves — on which *Dwoort Baal Kaat* and *Yira Boornak Nyininy* are based — was returned to Australia when Marc Francillon, an anthropology student from the University of Chicago learnt of Laves' time in Australia and made contact with him in the early 1980s and arranged to have material copied and deposited at the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) (Nash 1993: 101–102).

At the back of *Dwoort Baal Kaat* and *Yira Boornak Nyininy*, there is an essay giving voice to the participants in the Wirlomin Noongar Stories and Language Project who explain how they aim 'not only to return archival material to its home community but also how, beginning with a relatively small group, we progressively share our work by means of ever-widening, concentric circles' (*Yira Boornak Nyininy*, p. 33). This essay explains how a group of project participants conducted school visits in a number of south-western towns, discussing the

Noongar language, performing songs and stories, and explaining how the project aimed to share stories to their home communities first. A number of the performers are quoted about their on-tour experiences, and their pride and exhilaration is manifest. Sharing the project further afield has had similar effects: 'It's quite rare for a group of Noongar people to have that feeling in Noongar country, to feel that pride and power' (*Yira Boornak Nyininy*, p. 34). Readers who are interested in in-depth information about the content and processes of project workshops could consult the essays at the back of the texts from earlier in the series, *Mamang* (Scott, Woods et al 2011: 31–35) and *Noongar Mambara Bakitj* (Scott, Roberts et al 2011: 35–41).

It is refreshing that these texts do not avoid all mention of the tensions that inevitably and necessarily exist in complex undertakings, such as here: revitalising stories and languages from historical records through processes that develop confidence and expertise amongst modern-day Wirloman Noongar people. There are the relationships between traditional owners, the legal copyright holders of the Laves family, AIATSIS and holders of specialist skills such as linguists. There are the inevitable differences between modern lived culture and reintroduced elements of the past. Most obvious, in terms of the production of these bilingual texts, is the present-day knowledge of Noongar language versus the past uses of this language and its associated varieties. Throughout, the track trodden by the Wirlomin Noongar Stories and Language Project has been one of passionate community ownership and development:

We'd argue that context of our unjust shared history, and a relatively rapid movement from denigration to something more like interest, surely demands that such a heritage is firstly consolidated in, and shared from, a home community descended from its original speakers (*Yira Boornak Nyininy*, p. 34).

There are multiple purposes for which these bilingual booklets could be useful for Aboriginal language programs in schools. Not only would they be a boon for Noongar language programs, they provide an example for consideration by other groups who are interested in how they might best represent their own stories. The development of the texts through intensive language workshopping is a model for rendering a traditional language story accessible to community members and school students alike. For Aboriginal language programs in revival contexts, there would also be interest in the ways in which (partial) speakers have increased their confidence with their language heritage.

The new national curriculum has included 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures' as one of its three cross-curriculum priorities, with the stated intention of encouraging a deep understanding of the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Compared to the silence in Australian schools of last century this has to be seen as a step in the right direction. However, the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content of the national curriculum has been critiqued because it is not seen to be cognitively demanding for students, nor does it involve working with complex and contentious social and political issues (Lowe and Yunkaporta 2013: 7–10).

In this milieu, these booklets also have a contribution to make. Their value lies in their authenticity. They transparently acknowledge the source of each story's content – traditional and modern, their production processes and choices, their political aims of community ownership and development. As such they represent rich and multi-layered resources, which offer readers material worthy of consideration on many levels.

References

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) [nd], 'Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures', <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/CrossCurriculumPriorities/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-histories-and-cultures>.
- Grunseit, P 2011, 'Stories from the elders', *Inside History*, Nov-Dec 2011: 64–66.
- Lowe, K and T Yunkaporta 2013, 'The inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content in the Australian National Curriculum: A cultural, cognitive and socio-political evaluation', *Curriculum Perspectives* 33(1): 1–14.
- Nash, D 1993, Gerhardt Laves 15/7/1906–14/3/1993 [Obituary]. *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1/1993: 101–102.
- Scott, K, L Roberts and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project 2011, *Nongar Mambara Bakitj*, UWA Publishing, Perth.
- Scott, K, D Smith-Ali, H McGlade and J Henderson 2006, 'A protocol for Laves' 1931 Noongar Field Notes', http://www.wirlomin.com.au/pdf/Protocol_for_Laves_1931_Noongar_Field_Notes.pdf.
- Scott, K, I Woods and the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories Project 2011, *Mamang*, UWA Publishing, Perth.
- Denise Angelo
The Australian National University

Law's Anthropology: From Ethnography to Expert Testimony in Native Title by Paul Burke, x + 326 pp, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2011, ISBN 9781921862427 (pbk), \$28.00.

This book began life as the author's PhD thesis. It is an ambitious project structured around three main case studies of contested native title hearings: the groundbreaking *Mabo* matter in the Torres Strait Islands, the *Rubibi* case of the Broome area in Western Australia, and the *De Rose Hill* claim in the Western Desert part of South Australia. Each case study consists of a detailed discussion of the ethno-historical record for the area, which is then followed by a careful analysis of how this record was approached and strategically deployed by anthropologists and lawyers in the legal hearing. An additional chapter is devoted, I think as a kind of addendum to the original thesis, to the *Yulara* case, another significant Western Desert matter, this time relating to the area around Uluru/ Ayers Rock. These case studies are bookended on either side by theoretical considerations regarding the relationship between anthropology and the law.

Burke, who is both a lawyer and an anthropologist, set out to achieve two aims: to examine the two disciplines from a critical distance to expose their internal workings, and to examine their interaction both at the level of their different forms of practice and at that of individual agents in particular matters. I found him to be generally successful on both counts as he explores numerous issues that arise in this inter-disciplinary interface, a few of which I will outline here.

One of the issues explored is the tension that can arise when the legal process weighs up the evidence given by the expert anthropologist with long-term fieldwork experience in a given community on the one hand, and the anthropologist who is experienced within the profession but not the particular community of the native title claim. This issue receives particular attention in the context of the *Rubibi* case, where the anthropologist engaged by the claimants had the benefit of many years researching in the area, while the anthropologist engaged by the state government supported his claim to expertise through, what Burke calls, his 'academic capital' rather than on-ground experience among the community. The judge in that matter seemed happy to accept the expertise of both and adopted a mediating approach to their diverging ethnographic accounts, ultimately using aspects of both in forming his own views. The issue reemerges in *De Rose Hill* where the same dynamic between 'claimant' and 'State' anthropologist is mirrored, and in the *Yulara* case where the contrast is between two anthropologists engaged by the claimants. On the one hand there was Jon Willis, who had long-term and intimate involvement with the Western Desert people, on the other Peter Sutton, who is considered one of Australia's most experienced anthropologists in matters of Aboriginal land tenure and social organisation. To the alarm of the anthropological community, or at least that part engaged in native title, the judge formed the view that Sutton was not qualified to be an expert in this matter because he had not conducted long-term fieldwork among Western Desert people. From the judge's point of view, expertise

derived from independent academic research that is then brought to bear in the native title context, as in Jon Willis' case, was superior to research conducted specifically for a native title claim, which risked enmeshing the anthropologist in the self-interested agendas of the claimants. Surprisingly, on the basis of this one decision Burke raises the possibility that the courts might generally dismiss anthropological expertise. In fact, I am not aware of any other matter in which the anthropological expertise is not accepted. If the *Yulara* approach were applied universally, the native title system would grind to a halt for want of suitably qualified anthropologists. In practical terms, a large proportion of native title work is conducted by consultants who are not regional specialists in all the areas where they work. In my view, a reference to this systemic feature could have provided a useful contrast to the idiosyncratic nature of the *Yulara* decision.

Another issue Burke explores is the relationship between the legal team and their expert anthropologist. Was the anthropologist involved in formulating the case? Did he (all the experts considered in this book are male) give advice on ideal witnesses or lines of questioning? What emerges are four quite distinct scenarios. In the *Mabo* case, Jeremy Beckett was at a clear remove from the legal team, both in terms of his evidence, which did not entirely support their case, and interpersonally. In *Rubibi*, Patrick Sullivan had firm views on how the case should have been formulated at a more inclusive level to encompass the entirety of the local Aboriginal factions, but these views were not adopted by the legal team, causing him significant frustration. The research Craig Elliot conducted in preparation for *De Rose Hill*, would be the envy of many a consultant anthropologist who are commonly engaged on a 75-day contract to prepare a connection report: 110 days of fieldwork and 150 days of archival research. Yet he was not involved in developing the manner in which the claim would be advanced and was only ever intended as a junior player until he suddenly found himself thrust into the spotlight by the sudden ill-health of the main expert. At that stage his appreciation of the ethnographic reality was secondary to the brief he was given, which was determined by the legal focus of the claimants' lawyers at that advanced stage of the hearing.

Finally, Peter Sutton substantially assisted the legal team in developing pleadings, questions for claimants and the presentation of the ethnographic evidence. This approach was entirely consistent with long-held practices in the context of Northern Territory Land Rights claims, but the Federal Court judge took a dim view of it, interpreting it as causing a conflict with Sutton's role as unbiased court expert.

The charge of advocacy was leveled at both Elliot and Sutton and naturally Burke made it a focus of his analysis. The tension between the independence expected of a court expert and the advocacy of the legal team that engage the expert is ubiquitous in legal matters regardless of the expert's discipline. It is standard practice for the advocate acting for one party to seek to impugn the independence of the expert engaged by the other. Even where the expert is completely unbiased in their analytical approach, defensive responses to hostile cross-examination can still project an air of bias, which the cross-examining

party may well seek to exploit. According to Burke, this was the fate of Craig Elliott while in Sutton's case the problem arose, in addition to his involvement in developing the case, from the fact that the judge did not appreciate the way in which he dismissed aspects of the ethno-historic record, despite Sutton backing it up with extensive data.

In his concluding discussion, Burke expresses the view that the pressure towards advocacy on expert anthropologists by the legal team that engages them is relentless. He refers to a 'senior anthropologist' who suggested that there was pressure towards advocacy at every step of the process, and Burke himself agrees from his own experience. My own experience, however, is quite different. In my engagement by both state governments and Native Title Representative Bodies I found the lawyers to be exemplary in seeking to ensure my independence and keeping me at arm's length from their case development. So while the underlying tension between independence and advocacy is a structural feature of the adversarial (and often deeply cynical) legal process, particular pressure by the engaging party on the expert does not seem to be structural or universal. An inquiry focused on the individual agency of the lawyers and anthropologists in topic might have been an interesting approach in refining this analysis.

Overall this is a well-written and engaging book. The ethnographic summaries in themselves provide a useful starting point for anyone looking for an introduction to Australianist anthropology generally or an overview of the particular areas in question. Burke deliberately does not recap the old Radcliff-Brown/Hiatt/Stanner debate on local organisation, but nonetheless provides a thorough summary of the intellectual development of Australian Aboriginal land tenure models in the three regions discussed. There are without doubt other angles that could have been pursued in the analysis of the process by which the law subsequently 'digested' this ethnographic information, but the accounts as they stand are comprehensive and insightful. As I was personally involved in the *De Rose Hill* matter (as an in-house anthropologist engaged by the state) I can confirm that the significant level of detail into which Burke goes is largely correct, with minor exceptions being the misspelling of the name of one of the barristers and the mixing up of the names of the two pastoralists involved.

The weakest point for me was perhaps its opening chapter. I was surprised by the reference to US law on experts rather than the Australian Federal Court's Practice Direction for Expert Witnesses and noticed that some of the references to general anthropological debates, that surely must be ongoing, were confined to the 1980s and 1990s. Burke asks a rhetorical question, 'Will anthropological research for claims be rejected as "junk" anthropology?', which is a theme that is again picked up in the Yulara case study. As I alluded to above, there does not seem to be any basis to this fear beyond isolated incidents and as an analytical starting point it did not seem overly meaningful.

I did, however, appreciate the fundamental imagery of 'digestion' of anthropology by the law. All other aspects of the process may vary: the anthropologist's expertise or independence may be challenged or not; the process may involve gruelling

and aggressive cross-examination, or it may involve a more recent Federal Court practice, which sees the judge asking most of the questions of all experts simultaneously. But whatever the details, the anthropologists and their 'expert opinions' are only there as instruments to the lawyers and judge, as sources of 'raw data'. This raw data can then be digested together with all the other facts presented to the court and moulded to fit the needs of the legal process. In matters before the court the law always has the final say, thus the transformation of anthropology as an independent agent into 'law's anthropology' is inevitable.

Over the years, various anthropologists have been shocked by this harsh reality of the legal process and baulked at it, at times decrying the lawyer's lack of understanding of their discipline. This, however, misses the point that lawyers tend to only be interested in understanding to the extent that it suits their client's case. This is not ignorance, but a fulfillment of their professional duty. Perhaps it is his own legal training, but Burke does not seem to share that shock. This means he is able to provide a level-headed and forensic perspective on an area that is often clouded by emotions and vested interests. As such this is a valuable resource for lawyers and anthropologists involved in any stage of the native title process and more broadly for those wishing to understand the relationship between anthropology and the law in the fraught but socially fascinating recognition space that is the native title jurisdiction.

Kim McCaul
Adelaide

Our Stories Are Our Survival by Lawrence Bamblett, 206 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2013, ISBN 9781922059222 (pbk), \$34.95.

Lawrence Bamblett was one of 'the kids' when I started my fieldwork on Erambie Mission in Cowra. I barely knew him but I knew the people who constituted his world and many of their personal as well as their collective histories. It was a world of stories, and in taking this as his theme, Bamblett has captured what relatedness has meant for the people of Erambie. This is an important book. It should be read by anyone seeking insight into what it has meant to be a Wiradjuri person through the twentieth century and to today.

Bamblett has captured the warmth, laughter and intimacy of his Wiradjuri world. It transports me back into 'the mission' and the world that opened up for me but which few non-Wiradjuri residents of Cowra – past or present – could possibly imagine. It is a world informed by a different way of being in relationship, a different way of learning.

Bamblett presents us with a history of Erambie people's engagement in sport but this book is much more than that. As he crafts a history drawn from Erambie stories as well as local newspapers and other written accounts, he also opens up the dynamics of a racialised world, showing how Aboriginal prowess was explained away, demeaned even as it was recognised. His insights into the workings of racism are well-informed by an equal immersion into the world of which he writes, as well as the critical social science scholarship within which he positions himself. In doing so, he takes his account out of the personal and biographical and jolts his reader into thinking hard about the significance of what he is recounting.

It is also a world that is taking a huge battering, as are Aboriginal communities throughout Australia. But the people of Erambie have a long history of battering: as Bamblett says, 'our stories are our survival'. These are not fluffy words – this book is able to convey what stories are all about and what survival is about. He is referring to the experience of cultural distinctiveness, the value of one's own ways of understanding the world, of wanting to compete alongside whitefellas but not become whitefellas: the people Bamblett writes about like being who they were and are. Their experiences of themselves are framed by an oppositional, racialised environment but Bamblett makes very clear that they cannot be reduced to this.

In the 1960s Roland Robinson, in his collections of Aboriginal sacred stories, contrasted clever-fellers (*bugeen, doowan, wee-un*, etc) with characters he noticed in New South Wales stories, referred to as *Buloogan* (*birrogan, bulagaam*; fem. *gaungan*). These were the old men and women, wise and strong, recognised for their depth of knowledge, people upon whom a whole community could depend. Such Buloogan emerge in Bamblett's stories: the man he calls The Storyteller, who inspired Bamblett himself and from whom he learnt about the power of stories, and men of earlier generations such as Harry Murray. A generation older

than Bamblett, I heard many stories about the men and women one might call the Buloogan and Gaungan of earlier days on Erambie: the people who held the stories, and who lived and taught the values. They were the personification of the cultural strength of the community. They were simply called 'the old people'. The meaning conveyed was not like the way 'elder' is used today for people of senior years. It meant those with wisdom, those who should be listened to, learnt from. A person's 'old people' were almost always kin, so each person's memories of influential people in the community and in their personal lives differed. In time, I gained my own Gaungan, who shared their stories with me, some of whom are mentioned by Bamblett. The demeaning of the authority of these Buloogan and Gaungan over recent decades, to be replaced by external forms of governance and supposed expertise, is compounding the difficulties of identity and meaning which confront many young people in communities such as Erambie.

Stories are ways of transmitting experience and knowledge that are not always taken seriously enough in a world that values knowledge packaged in different, formal, objectified ways. Yet stories are the lifeblood of personal, social and cultural identities and could — perhaps should — be the lifeblood of historians and anthropologists. In a world in which reported events are focused on trauma or corruption, contrasted with flippancies of social media, stories still retain their power to transcend the present moment, to take our imaginations into worlds of experience we could not otherwise be a part of. Bamblett's accessible but provocative style means this is a book to be read by academics as well as a general readership. It should be mandatory reading in high school. However you come to it, do not think that Bamblett's book will let you off lightly.

Gaynor Macdonald
University of Sydney

Protest, Land Rights and Riots: Postcolonial Struggles in Australia in the 1980s by Barry Morris, 204 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2013, ISBN 9781922059345 (pbk), \$39.95.

The events discussed by Morris in this book centre on the funeral and subsequent riot in Brewarrina, 15 August 1987. An angry confrontation between relatives and friends of the recently, and controversially, deceased Lloyd Boney, was filmed by an ABC team. The 'riot' ended in the arrest of 17 Indigenous people and two trials. Morris conducts a close examination of the trials in which Sonny Bates and Arthur Murray were found guilty and sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment. Six years later as a result of six successful appeals for a retrial Murray and Bates were granted a permanent stay of proceedings. Of these events, the author notices three different kinds of analyses, of which the first was the media's search for social causes and effects. The second was the criminal trials focusing on individual actions, and thirdly, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody seeking to understand relationships between police and Aborigines. These are useful distinctions. Students of Judicial Enquiries, Truth and Justice Commissions and forensic investigations of state violence have lamented how often these seem to miss the point in focusing on individual state agents rather than the historical circumstances that seem to have led those agents in predictable directions.

Being the careful and respected academic that he is, Morris is drawn to analyse the larger societal influences affecting Brewarrina, especially the shift in the 1980s from state welfare to state neoliberalism. It is a refreshing change to see Aboriginal history under this lens. It helps the reader to move away from Marxist, colonialist, and post-colonialist narratives so familiar to us. A key factor in his analysis is a rural economic decline, resulting from the collapse of the pastoral industry generally. Here it is good to be reminded that the white citizens of Brewarrina carried an equivalent inferior status in relation to mainstream society as the town Aborigines — that is, ignorant, backward and irrational. Morris points to the pervasive intertwining of neoliberal economics and conservative thought in Anglo-American countries which, becoming the new economic orthodoxy, significantly changed the contours of state power. In this way some recently established measures of Indigenous governance, such as the Aboriginal legal and health services, came very rapidly to be seen as problematic. Neoliberalism champions a form of egalitarianism, Morris reminds us, that confers on all citizens the same moral status and moral worth. Hence specific socio-cultural identifications like Aboriginality are rendered secondary and even irrational. In the grip of neoliberalism, Premier Greiner abolished the NSW Public Service Board, gave the Premier's Department an expanded and centralised role to coordinate the public service, and tried to abolish the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW).

This analysis is enlightening even if one does not necessarily agree. After all, the Land Rights Act was passed barely five years before amidst much rejoicing

that the Aboriginal dispossession had at last been recognised. Had support for state welfare evaporated so quickly? To be fair, Morris sees neoliberalism more as a factor to reckon with rather than a key to the mystery, and he is careful not to overstress the consequences of this shift. He is wise to do this, not least because very similar phenomena can be seen at all times in our history when neoliberal economics were unknown. The Brewarrina police were apt to interpret the Aboriginal presence as evidence of incipient revolt; but so did the NSW missionary Ernest Gribble in the 1880s, and so did Cecil Cook in the Northern Territory in the 1930s. The Coniston massacre was precipitated by an equally exaggerated alarm spread amongst those who should have known better. In chapter 3 Morris develops an account of the relationship between social exclusion and crime as an analogous punitive shift that occurred when welfare policy was applied to criminal justice. He sees the primary role of market forces in regulating the economy acting equally to regulate and guarantee the security of its citizens. That happened in London, too, from the 1830s when the newly defined crime against private property handily answered a need to populate the empire with Anglo Saxon youth. More an imperial economy than a neoliberal one.

I recommend this thoughtful book. I do not see much evidence of Morris's deployment of the 'incisive tools of anthropology', as noted by Gill Cowlshaw on the back cover. I would call it just good history.

Peter Read

The Australian National University

Representing Humanity in the Age of Enlightenment edited by Alexander Cook, Ned Curthoys and Shino Konishi, 237 pp, Pickering and Chatto, London, 2013, ISBN 9781848933736 (pbk), 9781781440155 (e-book), £60.00.

My interest in this collection springs from inquisitiveness more than specialist notice. I offer this disclaimer to the editors and contributors in advance should I squib on a more disciplined evaluation, for I am not an eighteenth-century scholar, but a visual historian interested in prefigured conventions of representation, and how they may have shifted under the asperities of industrialised, colonial modernity. A neophyte, however, can provide a view from the outer filaments of the disciplinary clusters and this collection richly rewards the curious and wide-ranging, as it will those working more closely on the Enlightenment philosophico-scientific and political project.

‘Humanity’ was at the centre of eighteenth-century thought. The epistemological revolutions in natural science, philosophy, proto-anthropology, morality and human rights that informed the sweeping revolutions in Europe and the Americas, are shown to have mandated conditions across a range of social fields for conflicting and ‘competing visions of human life’ (p. 3). Horizons expanded exponentially through commerce, conquest and exploration, and human difference leavened debate about human essence and nature, with implications for political organising in the marshalling of new forms of citizenship, habitation, occupation, education, communication, remembering, conversing, composing and painting. To take one instance of how this collection recites intriguing expressions of these changes, in Vanessa Agnew’s essay musical difference figures national cultures in the deployment of the periphery in theorising social development. Yet all the while the Gora instrument of Khoikhoi evinced ‘musical polygenesis’ by ‘straddling two separate organological branches’ (p. 93). A transnational Enlightenment unfolds through the essays, one in which periphery perspectives assail the established norms and parochial conventions in thinking of human identity and relations.

The two meanings of the word ‘represent’ – to depict, and to speak for, transmute under new visions, vantages, places, frameworks and lenses. In another fascinating contribution in which the tension between these two meanings pull taut, Kate Fullagar shows how the neoclassical ideals of virtue and unity as cultivated by art clashed with the market for portraits and were ultimately undone by Reynold’s portraits of the Polynesian Mai, and the Cherokee Ostenaco. Aesthetic ideals of humanity were pursued in theories of taste by Reynolds, but his own ambivalent interest in the exotic threatened his aesthetic politics appealing as it did to a universal human character while depicting the essence of the New World savage.

In another of Shino Konishi’s studies of François Péron (zoologist and anthropologist of the French Baudin expedition of 1800–1804), his response to tombs on Maria Island and ruminations on the custom of cremation contrasts

with instructions for the disinterring and repatriating of savage remains by Cuvier. Péron however, followed the more typically enlightenment directive of Degérando, who placed more emphasis on 'deathways' or the treatment, rituals and scenes of the dead, and how these became a 'marker of humanity' (p. 112). Having posed a 'thought experiment' Péron was reacquainted with his initial impressions of the 'happiness and simplicity of the natural state' (p. 121). Nicole Starbuck takes up Baudin's expedition at Port Jackson where the encounter with the savage was now refracted through 15 years of colonialism. Ideas of pristine ethnographic subjects were counterposed by a strong sense of European corruption— at least by the 'lower orders'. Starbuck contextualises new disciplinary specialisation, in attempts to account for the liminality of the partially 'civilised' savage, within Revolutionary naturalist notions of human similarity— itself the basis for political organisation of equality within the nation. Efforts to represent Aborigines as unaffected by European contact were overshadowed by their agency in adapting, and the manifest deterioration of their health and wellbeing through contact. In Starbuck's incisive analysis, this apparent failure to achieve equality under European influence threatened the 'Republic's demographic venture' (p. 113). One wonders whether the French dispelled these doubts by figuring the English as lesser exemplars of civilisation.

Yet new notions of human rights spurred the civilising projects of colonial expansion. Alexander Cook examines French revolutionary semiotics in the positing of man as the bearer of rights within the political concept of the citizen in 'demarkating sovereignty'. Notorious Revolutionary philosopher Volney conferred a certain intelligibility to Humanity, in positing a common nature in the quest for emancipation as it was shared transnationally. As with a number of essays Cook examines the cosmopolitan impetus in the period's philosophical speculation. Volney perforated the 'barriers' by which Europe distinguished itself from the surrounding world, and countered the prevailing prejudices that the peoples of Africa and the Middle-East were 'universally fit for despotism'.

The New World and the 'Orient' spurred interest and supplied new arenas of philosophical speculation which took self-conscious forms such as the emphasis on 'conversation' discussed by Jon Mee, as new patterns of communication were enabled by urban gathering and, of course, print. Exchange and commerce propelled interest in the circulation of ideas while it conversely inculcated an ethos of politeness and dispensed a new role of women in 'literary sociability'. This segues neatly into Ned Curthoy's essay on German-Jewish *Bildung* and the 'quest for self-creation' (p. 65) marked by auto-critique through interlocutory performance. This idealised ethical comportment and aesthetic exercise was democratised. Curthoy's facility for language is itself an excursion into an idealised ethical comportment and aesthetic exercise making his essay both a trove for the word packrat, and a salute to the committed reader.

Mary Spongberg's study of Mary Hay's female biography in theories of woman, examines the influence of rational dissent in the 'sympathetic history that evolved as a feminized genre' (p. 28). As a category for analysis in Enlightenment historiography, the functionality of woman 'as a measure of civilisation' was

countered by Wollstonecraft. The rise of companionate marriage and the ideal of monogamy situated female chasteness as a civilising force, yet women's infidelity constituted a property infringement. Spongberg at times assumes knowledge in the reader, but again, perhaps only the uninitiated reader, on the scandal following Wollstonecraft's death, on Godwin's publication of her memoirs and the nature of her relationship with Imlay.

Gender is indissociable from the Enlightenment scope of human referentiality. Hsu-Ming Teo's careful reading of Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* reveals Enlightenment ideals were undone by gender inequity and domestic politics as it conflicted with ideals of democratic sociability. Montesquieu's Orientalism referenced Persian gender despotism to advance a 'proto-feminist' (p. 136) argument that European men were undemocratic in the private sphere. In an acute, ex-centric analysis of the medieval Arab world John Docker pivots forward into genocide studies and backwards to the Crusades to disorient the 'Western-centric narrative of secularization' that manifests from a 'totalizing Eurocentric historical framework' (p. 41). Docker creatively examines the appraisal of the Crusades by Hume, Robertson and Gibbon and the influences of stadial theory from the Scottish Enlightenment to pose a question increasingly urgent for our own times, 'how in history does change from one kind of society to another occur' (p. 43). He reveals the vagaries of history in the farcical and unintended outcomes of feudal lords waging a dishonourable, vicious war, such as the dawning of property rights in their vassals. The Crusades, Docker warns, presaged the repeated scourge of European genocide.

The productive tension that arises from the catachresis inhering in the meaning of representation appears again in perhaps the hub essay of the collection—Jonathan Lamb's essay which assiduously pursues Enlightenment elaborations of the category 'human' in political philosophy to then relate it to 'fictional constructs of the person' (p. 150) in Epicurean and dissident materialist thinking. Sensation, mediated matter, affect and social personality are mapped against fiction as an 'effort of mind absolutely necessary for a citizen fully active in the work of social representation'. Supernatural figures—such as the sylph—in the French libertine fairytale paradoxically—within the rationalist vocabulary of the time—engage in a 'wordly conversation with the human' in Peter Cryle's enchanting contribution. Henry Martyn Lloyd finds Sade's refusal 'to elevate the human within the realm of nature' (p. 173) precipitates the 'polymorphous nature of Enlightenment humanism' (p. 173). Moral sense as innate comes under attack by Sade who counters with a radical egoism, yet he argues against humans separating themselves from nature. Sade was in 'magnificently violation' of classical liberalism as it would adhere to utilitarianism later under Mill. Lloyd's essay is able to draw to a conclusion the twin uses of 'humanism' cohering the volume—'the ethical-political sense linked to the contemporary term "humanitarian" and the philosophical-anthropological sense, the science of the human' (p. 174).

As a conference proceeding, the collection remains cogent, yet its remit is hardly exclusive. It negotiates the twin impulses of the period towards humanisation

and individual political 'natural' rights. Encounters with diverse peoples as trade and exploratory routes took hold positioned the 'native' and 'noble savage' as paradoxically transnational types, whose telescoping variance prompted the taxonomies adapted from zoology to ethnology in the disciplinary carve up shaped by specialisation and attempts to manage the influx of unwieldy masses of new data. Indeed the coincidence of this typological impulse with developments in the technology from which it drew its lexicon— print, instituted an observational ethos in attempts to decipher a universalising character of man that informed political theorising, which might have lent more material to the collection. This republic of letters was international in scope, propelling a transnational public sphere that in fact harboured an interlocutory scene of plural publics, such as ecclesiastical as it vied against secularisation, guild as it responded to nascent industrialisation, scientific as its disciplines specialised, each entering into the social contract as it formalised and legislated property relations. The 'conceits' of revolutionary culture surely intersected with colonialism leaving this reader pondering how settlement echoed and foundered on these brightly suspended notions of sovereignty, citizenship, rights and emancipation for a humanity divided and fragmented. The manifold way 'man' was invoked and put to work, by what description and techniques, is the constellation of the collection— it warrants a wide currency.

Liz Conor
Melbourne

The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills: Forgotten Narratives edited by Ian D Clark and Fred Cahir, 314 pp, CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, 2013, ISBN 9780643108080 (hbk), \$59.95.

2011 marked the sesquicentenary of the Victorian Exploration Expedition (VEE), more frequently referred to as the 'Burke and Wills' expedition after the leaders Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills. Academics, creative and performance artists and scientists have been looking back on this expedition, assessing its legacy and attempting to re-adjust forgotten or underplayed aspects of the persisting narratives. The expedition, sponsored by the Royal Society of Victoria in 1861 has been mythologised over the last 150 years in a variety of ways: an embarrassing failure; a tragic tale of ego over sensibility; or a tale of warning against the deadly effects of Australia's harsh and intractable environment.

Burke and Wills led an expedition of 19 men with the goal of crossing Australia from south to north. They arrived in the Gulf of Carpentaria, but both leaders died on the return journey. By the end of the expedition, seven men had lost their lives and only one man, John King, crossed the continent with the expedition and survived.

The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills: Forgotten Narratives is an edited collection which stems from a conference held at the University of Ballarat in 2011. The title of the book promises to reveal forgotten Aboriginal narratives of the VEE and adds to other academic interest in viewing the legacy of the expedition in new ways. It could also be viewed as a companion text to *Burke and Wills: The Scientific Legacy of the Victorian Exploring Expedition* (eds) EB Joyce and DA McCann (CSIRO, 2011), which turned on its head the long-held myth that the VEE was not a scientific expedition, highlighting the expedition's scientific achievements rather than its 'tragedy and failure' narrative. *The Aboriginal Story* also comes after creative responses to the complicated events of the expedition. A mock coronial inquest in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria was performed in July 2011 to investigate the factors which may have contributed to the deaths of Burke, Wills and Gray. The coroner found that Burke's appointment was a 'fundamental mistake' which related to the deaths of Wills and Gray and that all three men died from beriberi, starvation, dehydration and thiamine deficiency. The coroner also argued 'One of the most fundamental errors made by the expedition was the decision not to utilise Aboriginal guides (either from the very start of the expedition or during the expedition) in any systematic way.' However, as this volume reveals in detail, Aboriginal guides, stewards and messengers were heavily utilised in the expedition and relief parties. Chapters by Cahir and Jeffries in particular, highlight the Aboriginal experiences of guiding, hosting and meeting with members of the VEE. The failure to profit from Aboriginal expertise remains the expedition's moral tale which the contributions in this book help to cement.

This volume begins with a contemporary Yandruwandha perspective, given by Aaron Paterson, straight away emphasising the book's attention to Aboriginal stories, past and present. Paterson gives a Yandruwandha perspective of the legacy of the VEE, quite different to the non-Indigenous legacies. Paterson offers a family history describing how the lone survivor of the expedition, John King, had sexual relations with a Yandruwandha woman, and Paterson goes through the subsequent King-Yandruwandha genealogy. He examines historical sources, interpreting from his specific cultural perspective, a compelling method and a good way to begin this volume which claims to tell the Aboriginal story of Burke and Wills.

Following Paterson's personal story another contemporary perspective, given by Richie Howitt, a descendent of A. W. Howitt who commanded one of the relief parties, is included. Richie's story reminds us of the way in which Aboriginal narratives have been forgotten and, therefore, is equally important to this volume, revealing how his childhood view of the VEE saga was completely devoid of Aboriginal people or history: 'There were glimpses, to be sure, of unknown others in the background.' He also observes that 'Yandruwandha hospitality to King has echoed in the everyday histories and geographies of Yandruwandha people' as Paterson's personal story attests. These individual perspectives from both sides differ from the other contributions that make up the rest of the volume, and introduce the book in a captivating way.

In the editors' introduction, Clark and Cahir borrow W. E. H. Stanner's phrase to describe how the exclusion of Aboriginal perspectives on the VEE has been a 'structural matter'. Their expulsion from the legacy of the expedition has been synonymous with the description of the landscape in Central Australia, as a 'ghastly blank', being located within a landscape which was conceived as being 'empty and primordial', where, 'European exploration brought the land into existence and formed a starting point for Australian history'. While Clark and Cahir explain how Aboriginal stories have been 'hidden' from western historical narratives more generally, it might have been useful to map the way Aboriginal experiences of European exploration have missed out on the revisionary scholarship led by Henry Reynolds in the 1980s who framed explorers' Aboriginal aides as 'Black pioneers'. The response from other historians has been slow.

Indigenous presence in expedition narratives of the VEE have not always been hidden. Between 1861-1901 they were part of historical accounts, following the pattern of Australian historiography more generally, they only became forgotten in the early 20th century. When Aboriginal people have been included in histories of the VEE they have been framed as treacherous, hostile and savage, untrustworthy — aligning with the belief that they did not help Burke and Wills.

This volume does not just add Aboriginal people to the Burke and Wills story, it firmly places the expedition in the cultural and historical setting of Aboriginal country, reminding us that it has always been more than just a failed race

between colonial rivals to get to the north. This is evident in the chapter by Luise Hercus on the linguistic creativity of the Aboriginal people of Cooper Creek, which helps to firmly place this story in Aboriginal country.

Harry Allen, who, like Hercus, has spent many years undertaking field work in this central region, focuses on Aborigines of the 'corner country', exploring the encounters between VEE members and Aboriginal people via a longitudinal study of earlier cross-cultural interactions, reminding us that in 1861 these encounters were not first contact scenarios for either the VEE or the Aboriginal people. This aspect is enhanced by Ian Clark's chapter which also shows that rather than being unsuited to the task of this expedition, many members of the party had previous bush experience and first-hand experience of dealings with Aboriginal people. His chapter unpacks the persistent, old myths surrounding the expedition. Allen studies the legacy of the expedition in real ways too, presenting a history of missions in the Lake Eyre Basin from 1866-1915 that were established as a result of the humanity shown by the Yandruwandha to John King; and the increasing scientific interest in the Yandruwandha following Howitt's ethnographic observations during his relief expedition.

David Dodd explores the Aboriginal contribution to the expedition through the texts of the four German expedition members — Becker, Beckler, Brahe and Neumayer — revising the widely held view that the VEE failed to utilise Aboriginal guides, emphasising the roles played by Dick and Peter in guiding Beckler's party and saving trooper Lyons and McPherson. These spotlights remind us that the Burke and Wills expedition was about more than just two men. There were many people involved in both the expedition and the various relief parties, and a focus on other characters offers important perspectives. Dodd's chapter frames the VEE and the experiences of the German members of the party in the context of nineteenth-century natural science and Humboldtian practice — meticulous observation and recording of the natural environment. Despite the lack of directives to observe and record information about Aboriginal people in the official Royal Society of Victoria instructions, the German naturalists did record a large amount of ethnographic information.

Chapters by Fred Cahir, Darryl Lewis and Peta Jeffries scrutinise Aboriginal testimony as a legitimate historical source to unearth Aboriginal perspectives of the expedition. Jeffries also undertakes a close reading of Becker's artwork, arguing that unlike other colonial illustrators, he tried to find a connection to the country and its original inhabitants. Jeffries' second chapter is in line with recent local and international scholarship on exploration and reveals that the presence of Aboriginal guides frequently created a co-production of knowledge, emphasising the collaborative, rather than lone work of exploration.

While this book incorporates Indigenous participation into the well-known expedition narrative, it does not draw out Indigenous agency. Some of the chapters are more concerned with documenting the removal of Aboriginal people from later narratives and the disappearance of them from representations in visual art, than putting their experiences back into the story, or re-framing the story

with Aboriginal centrality. Tracing the 'Australian silence' though, is important, as Leigh Boucher points out: 'to consider the political implications these different remembering's' and forgetting's 'might have for notions of territorial entitlement'. The presence of Aboriginal people 'within, alongside, against and around the exploration parties might have made for uncertain mythological terrain'. Boucher's exploration of Howitt's texts are the most revealing of the transformative powers of exploration in this period. Howitt's dawning sense of the complexity of Aboriginal geographies, cultures and histories is revealing of this. Boucher writes: 'the European category of 'blackfellow', which was applied to Aboriginal people across the continent, ignored their nuanced systems of identity, language and spatial proprietorship. Howitt's diaries revealed a party always struggling to figure out who belonged where.'

Several chapters describe the different types of Aboriginal engagement with or work for the VEE and relief parties, such as Aboriginal guides or message carriers. Aboriginal people were crucial in assisting the rescue expedition led by John McKinlay, which was despatched from Adelaide. Fred Cahir gives interesting insight into the function these news carriers performed, but also the mechanisms by which stories from the Aboriginal world were filtered and circulated by newspapers. However, his analysis is a little under-played. While his focus on messengers shifts the narrative away from 'treacherous natives' to the utility of Aboriginal people, and the veracity of information about the fate of the expedition that they brought to concerned rescuers, he only briefly suggests how stories were interpreted and manipulated by Aboriginal messengers for their own purposes — I would have liked to read more about those strategies.

More editorial work to curb repetitions in chapters may have made the book more readable, however, this is a very important inclusion to the history of the VEE and to the renewed focus on exploration history more generally. Creative responses to the expedition narrative, such as Paul Lambeth's art work and poetry, and Peta Jeffries' focus on art make this volume inter-disciplinary and therefore, this book offers an interesting variety of approaches and methods to interpreting this famous episode in Australian AND Aboriginal history.

Tiffany Shellam
Deakin University

The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania by Tom Lawson, 263 pp, I B Tauris, London, England, 2014, ISBN 9781780766263 (hbk), \$49.95.

Tom Lawson's specific field of research expertise is genocide. Based in England where he is a Professor in History at Northumbria University, Lawson is best known as the author of several monographs on the Holocaust, including one in which he investigated the Church of England's attitudes and responses towards that momentous mid-twentieth-century event. *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* follows a similar vein, but focuses on a different time and place, nineteenth century Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). More specifically he addresses Britain's role in what he has termed the ethnic cleansing of Van Diemen's Land, in the context of Lieutenant Governor George Arthur's declaration of martial law in the colony. He examines the Black Line operation against the island's rapidly declining Aboriginal population, the Black War, and George Augustus Robinson's conciliatory 'friendly mission' as well as its aftermath.

Lawson's express purpose in *The Last Man* was not to write a Tasmanian history per se, but to actively intervene into contemporary British culture (which, he contended, has grown somewhat smug after having been able to point the finger at Germany in the wake of World War Two) through reinscribing some of the atrocities committed by the former British Empire as it extended its global reach. While his Tasmanian case study was initially intended to form part a wide-ranging study of a global history of British involvement in genocide, Lawson found 'that the interactions between genocide in Tasmania and British history were so intricate, multi-layered and long-standing that that case alone demanded a specific book' (p. xviii).

The 'last man' from whom Lawson's book takes its title was William Lanne, also known as 'King Billy', who, when he died in 1869, was widely lamented as having been the last male Tasmanian Aboriginal person and whose remains were infamously desecrated within hours of his passing. While allegedly carried out by a colonial surgeon, the theft of Lanne's cranium took place because of the perceived value of the illicitly acquired material to scientists of race (specifically Edinburgh-based phrenologists), thus explicitly linking the colonial medico's actions with his British homeland. This infamous episode functions metonymically for Lawson's construction of the relationship between Britain and its island colony. He convincingly argues that it was the British colonisation of Van Diemen's Land, and the enactment of British policy in the Australian colonies, that resulted in the near extinction of Van Diemen's Land's Aboriginal population.

As John Connor noted in his endorsement of the book (printed on the rear of the dust jacket), *The Last Man*, while 'clearly written, accessible and strongly argued', is also 'obviously controversial'. Indeed, in the first of his six chapters Lawson devotes considerable attention to defining his use of terminology, including the word 'genocide', claiming that he is far from being the first historian to apply

this concept in the Tasmanian context. The author has traced the emergence of discourses of 'extermination' and 'extirpation' back to the early years of the colony, with published histories printed as early as Hobart-based newspaperman Henry Melville's 1835 *History of the Island of Van Diemen's Land* highlighting the devastating consequences of colonisation for the island's Aboriginal inhabitants (p. 8). After World War Two, according to Lawson, the 'author of the idea of genocide, Raphael Lemkin ... included the Tasmanian case study in his projected history of the concept'. Lemkin, Lawson has contended, drew heavily on James Bonwick's *The Last of the Tasmanians*, published in London in 1870, in framing this concept (p. 9). It is largely on this basis that Lawson has confidently applied the contested term to his depiction of events in Van Diemen's Land.

In critiquing the contemporary historiography of Tasmania, Lawson has suggested that these more recent histories in their detailed focus on the local, while valuable, have inadvertently written out the metropolitan centre. In the chapters that follow, he writes London back into the equation with some aplomb. His second chapter titled 'Genocide in Van Diemen's Land' reconsiders the event at Risdon Cove in 1804 (known as the Risdon Cove massacre) and critiques the retrospective significance placed on this as the seminal event that seemingly locked the 'indigenous Tasmanians ... in a spiral of vengeance' following which warfare and the resultant near annihilation of the indigenes became inevitable (p. 29). Lawson also engages with the Line and the Black War in this chapter, during the course of which he takes particular issue with Henry Reynolds' interpretation of Britain's role in this devastating conflict.

In his third chapter, Lawson recasts Conciliator George Augustus Robinson's 'Friendly Mission' and the consequent series of removals of the majority of the remaining Tasmanian Aboriginal people to smaller, offshore islands as an episode of 'ethnic cleansing'. In so doing, he states his disagreement with James Boyce who recently constructed the deportation as representing 'a breach with Downing Street' (p. 70). Instead, for Lawson, the removals represented a continuum of policies agreed between London and Hobart in the 1820s, and were a mechanism for furthering the British mission to colonise and civilise the original inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land. He elaborates this argument at greater length in his fourth chapter, which is devoted to the Flinders Island settlement to which the exiles were ultimately sent, and the ways in which 'fears of their imminent demise haunted British politics in the mid 1830s' (p. 91), particularly contributing to the establishment between 1835 and 1837 of a select committee in the British House of Commons that considered the impacts of British settlement on aboriginal peoples across the Empire.

The final two chapters of *The Last Man* see a shift in geographical focus away from Van Diemen's Land back to Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Lawson uses these chapters to 'challenge this assumed separation of a destructive, indeed genocidal, Empire from its British home' (p. 127). He does so through first considering the extensive rendering through art and prose in Britain of the extermination in Van Diemen's Land, then through turning

to recent negotiations over the return of Indigenous people's remains from British museums and other collecting institutions to present-day Aboriginal communities.

While Lawson has not delved into the everyday minutiae of life in colonial Tasmania, it was not his intention to do so. Instead, he has engaged with Vandemonian history only in so far as was necessary to support his overarching aim of writing London back into the colonial context of death and destruction at the far reaches of Empire. In considering Vandemonian history at the macro-level of British policy and practice, and in the context of the historic and contemporary reverberations of the Tasmanian past in present-day Britain, Lawson has made a valuable contribution to the historiography. *The Last Man* complements and, more controversially, contests aspects of, the locally produced canon and will be of interest to anyone engaging with histories of colonial Australia and/or with an interest in the British Empire, its legacies, and Britons' present-day understandings and conceptualisations of these.

Kristyn Harman
University of Tasmania

This text taken from *Aboriginal History*, Volume 38,
edited by Shino Konishi, published 2015 by
ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.